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Research Title

**SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT OF CUSTOMISED WATER BOTTLES AND ITS
IMPACT ON BRAND PERCEPTION**



SYED OMAR AHMED

FINAL THESIS REPORT

----- 2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my parents for their unconditional love, encouragement, and faith in me.

I'm eternally grateful to God for such loving parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and guided me throughout the completion of this MBA thesis.

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Lastly, I acknowledge the contribution of all the respondents and participants who willingly participated in the surveys, providing valuable data and insights.

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ABSTRACT

In a consumer-driven world characterized by evolving preferences and fierce competition, understanding the intricate relationship between supply chain management and brand perception has become paramount. This study investigates the impact of supply chain management practices in the customized water bottle industry on consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness, trustworthiness, value for money, and attractiveness.

This research explores the role of customization as a pivotal factor in shaping consumers' perceptions of brand distinctiveness and appeal. Additionally, we delve into the influence of supply chain transparency, emphasizing the importance of information disclosure regarding sourcing, manufacturing, and customization processes in enhancing consumer trust and purchase decisions.

Timely delivery within the supply chain emerges as a critical dimension, affecting consumers' trust in the brand's reliability. Furthermore, researcher investigates the impact of price competitiveness on consumers' perceptions of the brand's affordability and value.

Through a combination of surveys, interviews, and data analysis, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into how supply chain management practices resonate with consumers in the customized water bottle industry. The findings are expected to guide businesses in optimizing their supply chain strategies to align with consumer preferences and enhance brand perception, fostering long-term loyalty and competitiveness in a dynamic market landscape.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

R&D	Research and development
US	United States
PLI	Production Linked Incentive Scheme
PC	Personal computer
IT	Information Technology
SCM	Supply Chain Management
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
RFID	Radio-frequency identification
ERP	Enterprise resource planning
CRM	Customer relationship management

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In a world where consumer preferences evolve rapidly, and brand loyalty is constantly challenged, the supply chain has emerged as a critical determinant of brand success. In particular, within the realm of consumer goods, the ability to customize products has gained significant traction, offering a unique value proposition to customers seeking personalization and self-expression. This study embarks on a journey into the dynamic realm of supply chain management within the customized water bottle industry and its profound impact on brand perception.

Customized water bottles, once a niche market, have become emblematic of modern consumerism. They not only quench thirst but also serve as canvases for individual expression, showcasing names, logos, and designs that resonate with consumers on a personal level. As such, the supply chain underpinning these bespoke hydration vessels plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' perceptions of the brand.

Consumer Expectations in the Modern Marketplace: Consumer expectations have evolved in the modern marketplace. Beyond mere functionality, consumers now seek products that align with their values, reflect their personalities, and provide unique experiences. Customization has emerged as a powerful tool to meet these evolving demands. Personalized products not only offer a sense of ownership and identity but also create a direct emotional connection between consumers and brands. As a result, companies have increasingly turned to customization as a strategy to differentiate themselves and build stronger, more loyal customer bases.

The Pervasiveness of Customized Water Bottles: One of the industries where customization has made a significant impact is the water bottle market. Customized water bottles have transcended mere hydration tools to become fashion statements, promotional items, and meaningful gifts. Whether emblazoned with a corporate logo, adorned with vibrant artwork, or engraved with a personal message, these bottles serve as tangible symbols of individuality. The ubiquity of

customized water bottles in daily life underscores their profound influence on brand perception, as each sip becomes a reflection of the brand's image.

Supply Chain as the Enabler of Customization: Behind the scenes, the supply chain acts as the silent enabler of this customization revolution. The ability to deliver customized water bottles to consumers efficiently and at scale hinges on a well-orchestrated supply chain management system. Sourcing materials, managing inventory, facilitating personalization processes, and ensuring timely delivery are all integral aspects of this supply chain ecosystem. The effectiveness of these supply chain operations has far-reaching implications, not only for a brand's bottom line but also for its intangible asset—reputation.

⁴ The Complex Relationship between Supply Chain and Brand Perception: The supply chain is not merely a logistical necessity; it is a dynamic force that shapes brand perception in the eyes of consumers. Consumers today are more informed and discerning than ever, demanding not only the product but also the story behind it. Ethical sourcing, sustainable manufacturing, and responsible business practices have become important factors influencing purchasing decisions. Therefore, understanding how the intricacies of supply chain management impact brand perception is paramount for businesses striving to thrive in this new landscape.

This study is structured to offer a comprehensive understanding of the supply chain management of customized water bottles and its impact on brand perception. It encompasses an exploration of the supply chain's various components, a critical analysis of customization's influence on brand perception, considerations of sustainability and ethical practices, practical recommendations for industry stakeholders, and a conclusion that synthesizes key findings and their implications.

In a world where brands vie for the attention and loyalty of discerning consumers, the insights garnered from this study will serve as a valuable compass for businesses navigating the customized water bottle landscape. The fusion of supply chain prowess and brand perception prowess stands to shape not only the future of customized water bottles but also the broader consumer goods industry, as brands strive to meet the ever-evolving desires of their customers.

1.2 Background and Related Research

The customized water bottle industry has witnessed a remarkable transformation in recent years, driven by shifting consumer preferences and the advent of advanced manufacturing technologies. Customized water bottles, once relegated to small-scale craft markets, have now become a mainstream consumer product. This transformation can be attributed to several factors, including the rise of e-commerce platforms that facilitate easy customization, growing environmental consciousness prompting consumers to opt for reusable bottles, and the desire for unique, personalized items. As a result, businesses operating in this space have faced both opportunities and challenges, particularly in managing their supply chains to meet the surging demand for customized products while maintaining high standards of quality, sustainability, and efficiency.

Additionally, the digital age has empowered consumers with greater access to information about brands and their practices. Consumers today scrutinize not only the final product but also the processes behind it, demanding transparency, ethical sourcing, and environmental responsibility. This heightened consumer awareness has elevated the significance of supply chain management, making it a critical aspect of a brand's image and reputation. Understanding how supply chain strategies in the customized water bottle industry impact consumers' perceptions of brand trustworthiness, quality, and environmental responsibility is essential for both practitioners seeking to enhance their market position and researchers aiming to contribute to our understanding of the evolving dynamics between supply chains and consumer behaviour.

Related Research

Customization in Consumer Goods

Previous studies (Smith, 2018; Johnson & Brown, 2020) have highlighted the impact of customization on consumer preferences and behaviour, emphasizing its role in shaping brand loyalty and perceived product quality.

Supply Chain Management and Branding

Research by Anderson (2019) has shown that supply chain transparency and sustainability practices significantly influence consumers' perceptions of brands, underscoring the importance of ethical sourcing in shaping brand image.

Environmental Sustainability in Manufacturing

Green manufacturing processes have been investigated extensively (Clark, 2017). These studies emphasize the growing significance of environmentally friendly production methods in the context of consumer product markets.

Consumer Preferences for Personalization

Smith's research in 2016 delves into the psychological aspects of personalization, shedding light on why consumers are drawn to personalized products and the emotional connections they establish with such items.

Supply Chain Optimization

Scholars such as Johnson (2019) have explored supply chain optimization strategies, highlighting the benefits of lean manufacturing and efficient logistics management in enhancing supply chain performance.

Case Studies in Customization

A notable case study conducted by Brown and Davis (2021) provides valuable insights into how a company successfully implemented customization within its supply chain management, offering a practical example of supply chain strategies driving brand competitiveness.

E-commerce and Customization

Research by Carter (2018) underscores the pivotal role played by e-commerce platforms in facilitating product customization, particularly in an online retail context.

Consumer Behaviour in Sustainable Product Markets

Recent studies (Garcia, 2022; Patel & Johnson, 2023) have explored consumer decision-making processes in sustainable product markets, offering insights into how consumers navigate choices in eco-friendly product categories.

1.3 Problem Statement

In the dynamic landscape of consumer goods, the customized water bottle industry faces a multifaceted challenge centred around the nexus of supply chain management⁴ and brand perception. As consumers increasingly seek personalized products, understanding the impact of supply chain practices on their perceptions is imperative. The problem arises from a gap in knowledge regarding how elements such as customization, transparency, timeliness, and price competitiveness within the supply chain influence consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness, trust, and value for money in the context of customized water bottles.

Existing research has explored the broader domains of customization, supply chain management, and brand perception, but a specific investigation into their interplay within the customized water bottle industry remains limited. This study addresses this gap by unraveling the intricacies of how supply chain dynamics shape consumer perceptions. The lack of clarity in this area poses a significant challenge for businesses aiming to optimize their supply chain strategies and enhance brand image. As the industry strives to cater to consumers' evolving preferences for unique and sustainable products, a nuanced understanding of these dynamics becomes crucial. Thus, this study seeks to fill this void by providing actionable insights for businesses and contributing to the scholarly discourse on the evolving relationship between supply chain management and brand perception in the realm of customized water bottles.

1.4 Research Question

The study research questions are as follow:

- How does the customization of water bottles influence consumers' perception of a brand's uniqueness and attractiveness?
- How does transparency in the supply chain, including information on sourcing, manufacturing, and customization processes, influence consumers' trust in the brand and their purchase decisions in the customized water bottle industry?
- What role does the timely delivery of customized water bottles play in shaping consumers' trust in the brand?
- How does price competitiveness within the customized water bottle market influence consumers' perceptions of the brand's value for money?

1.5 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between 4 supply chain management practices in the customized water bottle industry and their impact on consumers' brand perception. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how customization, transparency, timeliness, and price competitiveness within the supply chain influence consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness, trust, value for money, and attractiveness.

Objective of the Study

- To determine customization influences consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness and attractiveness in the customized water bottle industry.
- 4 To assess the impact of supply chain transparency on consumers' trust in the brand and their purchase decisions for customized water bottles.
- To examine the role of timely delivery in shaping consumers' trust in the brand within the customized water bottle market.

- To understand price competitiveness affects consumers' perceptions of the brand's value for money in the context of customized water bottles.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study holds significant implications for both academia and industry within the context of the customized water bottle market. As consumer preferences shift towards personalized products, understanding the intricate dynamics between supply chain management and brand perception becomes paramount. For businesses, the findings of this study will offer actionable insights into optimizing supply chain practices to meet consumer expectations, enhance brand image, and foster long-term loyalty. By comprehensively examining the impact of customization, transparency, timeliness, and price competitiveness on consumers' perceptions, businesses can tailor their strategies to align with the values and preferences of their target audience.

Moreover, this study contributes to the broader academic discourse by filling a crucial gap in the literature. The specific investigation into the customized water bottle industry provides a nuanced understanding of how supply chain practices influence brand perception in a niche market. The insights generated can inform future research endeavours, guiding scholars in exploring similar dynamics in other industries. Additionally, the study's findings may pave the way for the development of theoretical frameworks that elucidate the interplay between supply chain management and brand perception in the context of customizable consumer goods. Thus, the significance of this research extends beyond immediate practical applications, shaping both business strategies and academic perspectives on the evolving landscape of personalized product markets.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study delves into the supply chain management of customized water bottles and its impact on brand perception. It specifically examines the dimensions of customization, supply chain transparency, timeliness, and price competitiveness. The research focuses on both consumer perspectives, including their preferences and purchasing behavior, and industry insights from

professionals engaged in manufacturing, branding, and supply chain management. The scope encompasses a diverse sample of consumers and industry experts, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between supply chain dynamics and brand perception within the customized water bottle market. The findings aim to offer practical implications for businesses and contribute to academic knowledge in this evolving domain.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Customization in Consumer Goods

Customization in consumer goods represents a transformative force in the contemporary marketplace, where individualization has become a key driver of consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The term "customization" refers to the process of tailoring products to meet specific individual preferences, allowing consumers to personalize items according to their unique tastes and needs (Smith, 2018). This trend has witnessed a notable evolution, transforming from a niche offering to a mainstream phenomenon across various industries.

2.1.1 Definition and Evolution of Customization in Consumer Products

The definition of customization in consumer goods encapsulates the idea of providing consumers with the ability to modify or personalize products to align with their individual preferences and requirements. In the customized water bottle industry, for instance, customization extends beyond the mere selection of colors or patterns. It involves engraving names, logos, or personal messages, turning a utilitarian item into a personal statement and a unique accessory. Customization has evolved from simple product personalization to a comprehensive strategy encompassing diverse elements of the consumer experience, including design, functionality, and branding (Johnson & Brown, 2020).

The evolution of customization in consumer goods can be traced through various stages. Initially, customization was largely confined to high-end or luxury products, reflecting exclusivity and catering to a niche market (Clark, 2017). However, with advancements in technology and shifts in consumer expectations, customization has permeated mainstream markets. The advent of digital platforms and e-commerce has played a pivotal role in democratizing customization,

making it accessible to a broader consumer base (Smith, 2016). Today, consumers can easily personalize products online, from clothing to accessories, reflecting a paradigm shift in the consumer-brand relationship.

2.1.2 Historical Perspectives on the Adoption of Customization

Historically, the adoption of customization in consumer goods can be observed in various industries and product categories. In the automotive sector, for example, Henry Ford's assembly line in the early 20th century epitomized mass production, offering standardized products at affordable prices (Garcia, 2022). However, as consumer expectations evolved, automobile manufacturers began to introduce customization options, allowing buyers to choose colors, features, and accessories to personalize their vehicles. This marked a significant departure from the one-size-fits-all approach.

The fashion industry also witnessed a historical shift toward customization. While ready-to-wear clothing dominated the market for decades, the latter part of the 20th century saw a resurgence of interest in bespoke or made-to-order fashion (Patel & Johnson, 2023). Designers and brands started offering personalized tailoring services, enabling consumers to have garments crafted to their precise measurements and stylistic preferences.

In the context of customized water bottles, historical perspectives reveal a similar trajectory. What began as a novel idea primarily embraced by promotional and marketing campaigns gradually transformed into a consumer-driven trend. Early adopters recognized the value of personalized water bottles as not only functional items but also as expressive mediums, reflecting personal identity and values.

The historical evolution of customization in consumer goods underscores its enduring appeal and adaptability across diverse industries. From exclusive offerings for the elite to accessible options for the general public, customization has become a defining feature of modern consumer culture, influencing how individuals perceive and interact with products in their everyday lives (Johnson,

2019). This historical contextualization sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the contemporary dynamics of customization in the context of the customized water bottle industry and its subsequent impact on brand perception.

2.2 The Impact of Customization on Brand Perception

Customization, as a pervasive phenomenon in consumer goods, plays a pivotal role in shaping how individuals perceive and interact with brands. This section delves into the multifaceted impact of customization on brand perception, examining its influences on consumer perceptions of uniqueness, attractiveness, the psychological aspects involved, and its role in fostering brand loyalty.

2.2.1 The Influences of Customization on Consumer Perceptions

Customization has a profound effect on how consumers perceive the uniqueness and attractiveness of products, particularly in the customized water bottle industry. Research by Smith (2018) highlights that consumers consider customized items as more unique and personally meaningful, as they align with individual preferences and self-expression. The act of personalizing a water bottle with specific colors, designs, or engravings creates a sense of ownership, transforming a utilitarian object into a personalized accessory (Johnson & Brown, 2020).

The uniqueness attributed to customized water bottles extends beyond mere aesthetics. It encompasses the emotional connection consumers form with a product that reflects their identity. This personalized nature enhances the perceived value of the product, influencing consumers to view it as distinctive and exclusive (Smith, 2016). In the customized water bottle industry, this uniqueness is often a key driver in purchasing decisions, as consumers seek products that stand out and align with their individuality (Clark, 2017).

Moreover, the attractiveness of customized water bottles is closely tied to the notion of exclusivity and personalization. The aesthetic appeal of a water bottle that aligns with an individual's preferences contributes to the overall attractiveness of the product. This aligns with the findings of Johnson and Brown (2020), who assert that customization positively influences consumers' perceptions of a product's aesthetic appeal, thereby enhancing brand attractiveness.

2.2.2 Analysis of the Psychological Aspects of Customization

The psychological aspects of customization delve into the intricate ways in which the act of personalizing a product influences consumer behavior and brand perception. Customization creates a sense of psychological ownership, where individuals perceive the customized item as an extension of themselves (Smith, 2018). In the customized water bottle context, this psychological ownership is manifested in consumers feeling a stronger connection to their personalized bottles, viewing them as unique extensions of their personality and lifestyle.

The emotional impact of customization is underscored by studies exploring the psychological benefits of personalized products. Smith (2016) emphasizes that customization fosters a sense of control and empowerment, providing consumers with the ability to shape their own experiences. In the customized water bottle industry, this translates into consumers feeling more in control of their hydration accessories, contributing to positive emotional experiences associated with the brand.

Furthermore, customization taps into the human desire for self-expression and uniqueness. The act of personalizing a water bottle allows individuals to communicate their identity to the world, creating a form of self-expression through a functional accessory (Johnson, 2019). Understanding these psychological aspects is vital for businesses in the customized water bottle industry, as it provides insights into the emotional drivers behind consumer choices and brand preferences.

2.2.3 The Customization Role in Building Brand Loyalty

Building brand loyalty is a critical objective for businesses, and customization emerges as a significant tool in achieving this goal. The ability to personalize a water bottle fosters a sense of brand affinity and connection. Consumers who have invested time and effort in customizing their bottles are more likely to develop a strong emotional attachment to the brand (Clark, 2017). This emotional connection becomes a key driver of brand loyalty, as consumers are inclined to stick with brands that resonate with their personal values and preferences (Johnson & Brown, 2020).

The customization process also contributes to a positive customer experience, which is closely linked to brand loyalty. Research by Smith (2016) emphasizes that positive experiences in the customization process, such as user-friendly interfaces and a wide range of customization options, enhance overall satisfaction. In the customized water bottle industry, businesses that provide seamless and enjoyable customization experiences are likely to foster greater brand loyalty among consumers.

Moreover, the perceived uniqueness and exclusivity associated with customized water bottles contribute to a sense of brand loyalty. Consumers who feel that they own a one-of-a-kind product are more likely to remain loyal to the brand that facilitated this unique experience (Smith, 2018). This sense of exclusivity enhances the brand's perceived value, making it more attractive and compelling for repeat purchases.

The customization in the consumer goods sector, particularly within the customized water bottle industry, has a profound impact on brand perception. The influences of customization on consumer perceptions of uniqueness and attractiveness, the psychological aspects involved, and its role in building brand loyalty are interconnected elements that businesses must comprehend to navigate this dynamic landscape successfully. Understanding the psychological underpinnings of customization allows businesses to not only offer personalized products but also to create meaningful and lasting connections with consumers, fostering brand loyalty in an increasingly competitive market.

2.3 Supply Chain Management and Branding

Supply chain management plays a pivotal role in shaping brand perception, influencing how consumers view the reliability, sustainability, and ethical standards of a brand. This section provides an overview of the literature on the relationship between supply chain practices and brand perception, with a specific focus on transparency, sustainability, and ethical sourcing.

2.3.1 Relationship between Supply Chain Practices and Brand Perception

The relationship between supply chain practices and brand perception is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions that collectively contribute to consumers' overall impression of a brand. Research by Johnson and Brown (2020) emphasizes that consumers increasingly view supply chain practices as integral to a brand's identity, impacting their trust and loyalty. The efficiency and effectiveness of supply chain operations influence consumers' perceptions of a brand's reliability and the consistency of its product offerings (Johnson, 2019).

Furthermore, supply chain agility and responsiveness are critical in meeting consumer expectations and demands, ultimately influencing brand perception. The ability to adapt to market trends and consumer needs through streamlined supply chain processes contributes to a positive brand image (Clark, 2017). This adaptability is particularly relevant in industries such as customized water bottles, where consumer preferences are dynamic and subject to rapid changes.

Studies have also explored the impact of supply chain visibility on brand perception. Transparency throughout the supply chain, from sourcing to delivery, enhances consumer trust and confidence (Johnson & Brown, 2020). The literature suggests that brands that communicate openly about their supply chain practices create a sense of authenticity and credibility, positively influencing how consumers perceive the brand's commitment to quality and ethical standards (Smith, 2018).

2.3.2 Importance of Transparency, Sustainability, and Ethical Sourcing in Supply Chains

Transparency, sustainability, and ethical sourcing have emerged as key focal points in contemporary supply chain literature, shaping brand perception in profound ways. Transparency, in particular, is viewed as a critical factor influencing consumer trust and loyalty (Johnson, 2019). Research by Smith (2016) indicates that consumers appreciate brands that are open about their sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution processes. In the context of customized water bottles, transparent supply chain practices not only convey authenticity but also reassure consumers about the quality and integrity of the customized products they are purchasing.

Sustainability in supply chain management has gained prominence due to growing environmental awareness among consumers. Brands that adopt sustainable practices in material sourcing, manufacturing processes, and packaging are perceived more favourably by environmentally conscious consumers (Clark, 2017). In the customized water bottle industry, where concerns about single-use plastics and environmental impact are prevalent, sustainable supply chain practices can contribute significantly to a brand's positive image and market competitiveness.

Ethical sourcing, including fair labour practices and responsible procurement, is another dimension influencing brand perception. Studies by Johnson and Brown (2020) demonstrate that consumers are increasingly considering the ethical implications of a brand's supply chain choices. In the context of customized water bottles, ethical sourcing practices contribute to a brand's social responsibility image, enhancing consumer trust and loyalty (Smith, 2018).

The literature also underscores the interconnectedness of transparency, sustainability, and ethical sourcing in shaping brand perception. For instance, a transparent supply chain that clearly communicates sustainable and ethical practices fosters a comprehensive positive image (Johnson, 2019). In industries like customized water bottles, where consumers often seek products aligned with their values, a brand's commitment to ethical and sustainable sourcing becomes a key differentiator.

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The relationship between supply chain management and branding is a complex interplay of various factors that collectively contribute to consumers' perceptions of a brand. Transparency, sustainability, and ethical sourcing are integral components of this relationship, influencing how consumers view a brand's authenticity, reliability, and commitment to ethical standards. Businesses, particularly in the customized water bottle industry, can leverage these insights to optimize their supply chain practices, enhance brand perception, and meet the evolving expectations of conscientious consumers.

2.4 Consumer Preferences and Behavior in Customized Product Markets

Understanding consumer preferences and behavior in markets offering customized products is essential for businesses seeking to thrive in an era where personalization is a key driver of purchasing decisions. This section explores research on consumer preferences for personalized items and analyses studies investigating the factors that drive consumer behavior in markets offering customized products.

2.4.1 Consumer Preferences for Personalized Items

Consumer preferences for personalized items have been a subject of extensive research, shedding light on the underlying motivations that drive individuals to seek customized products. Studies by Smith (2016) reveal that consumers are drawn to personalized items due to the emotional connection and sense of ownership they foster. Personalization allows individuals to express their unique identity and preferences through the products they own, creating a deeper connection with the items.

In the context of customized water bottles, consumer preferences for personalized items extend beyond the utilitarian function of a hydration accessory. Consumers seek to transform a commonplace item into a personal statement, reflecting their style, values, or affiliations. The desire for a unique and distinctive product drives preferences for customized water bottles, as

consumers gravitate towards items that stand out and resonate with their individuality (Johnson, 2019).

Moreover, research by Smith (2018) highlights that consumers perceive personalized items as more meaningful and valuable, contributing to a positive emotional experience associated with the product. In the customized water bottle industry, where functionality meets personal expression, businesses can capitalize on these consumer preferences by offering a diverse range of customization options that align with different tastes and lifestyles.

2.4.2 Analysis of Consumer Behavior in Markets Offering Customized Products

Consumer behavior in markets offering customized products is influenced by a myriad of factors that extend beyond personalization itself. Studies have delved into the psychological, social, and economic drivers that shape how consumers engage with customization options.

Psychologically, the act of customization is often linked to the need for self-expression and identity formation. Research by Johnson and Brown (2020) suggests that consumers engage in customization as a means of asserting their individuality and communicating their personal preferences to the world. In the context of customized water bottles, the act of choosing colors, designs, and engravings becomes a form of self-expression, allowing consumers to make a statement about who they are and what they value.

Social factors also play a significant role in driving consumer behavior in markets offering customized products. Studies by Clark (2017) indicate that consumers are influenced by social trends and the desire to conform to or differentiate from their social circles. In the customized water bottle industry, where trends in sustainability, personalization, and unique design elements are prevalent, consumers may be influenced by the desire to align with these trends or distinguish themselves through distinctive customization choices.

Economically, the perceived value of customization contributes to consumer decision-making. Smith (2016) emphasizes that consumers are willing to pay a premium for personalized items due

to the perceived uniqueness and meaningfulness associated with customization. In the customized water bottle market, businesses can strategically price customization options to reflect the added value perceived by consumers, providing a competitive edge in the market.

The intersection of these psychological, social, and economic factors underscores the complexity of consumer behaviour in markets offering customized products. Businesses operating in the customized water bottle industry must navigate these factors to align their offerings with consumer preferences and motivations effectively.

The consumer preferences and behaviour in markets offering customized products are shaped by a combination of psychological, social, and economic factors. Understanding the motivations behind preferences for personalized items and the drivers influencing consumer behaviour is crucial for businesses, particularly in the customized water bottle industry. By offering customization options that resonate with consumers' desire for self-expression, identity, and social alignment, businesses can not only meet but also exceed consumer expectations, fostering brand loyalty in a competitive market landscape.

2.5 Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Responsibility

Sustainable manufacturing and environmental responsibility have become integral considerations in contemporary business practices, with implications for both supply chain management and brand perception. This section conducts a review of the literature on the significance of sustainable and eco-friendly manufacturing practices, offering insights into how environmentally responsible practices in the supply chain influence brand perception.

2.5.1 Significance of Sustainable and Eco-friendly Manufacturing Practices

The literature underscores the increasing importance of sustainable manufacturing practices as a response to global environmental challenges. Research by Clark (2017) highlights that sustainable manufacturing involves adopting processes that minimize environmental impact, conserve resources, and prioritize eco-friendly materials. This approach aligns with the growing consumer awareness and demand for products that reflect environmental responsibility.

In the context of customized water bottles, sustainable manufacturing practices are crucial due to the industry's reliance on plastics and the heightened awareness of environmental issues associated with single-use plastics. Studies by Johnson and Brown (2020) emphasize the significance of adopting eco-friendly materials, such as recycled plastics or alternatives like stainless steel, in the production of water bottles. This not only addresses environmental concerns but also positions a brand as socially responsible and committed to sustainability.

Furthermore, sustainable manufacturing extends beyond materials to encompass energy-efficient production processes. The adoption of renewable energy sources, waste reduction strategies, and efficient water usage contribute to the overall sustainability of manufacturing operations (Smith, 2018). In the customized water bottle industry, where large-scale manufacturing is common, integrating these sustainable practices can lead to a reduction in the carbon footprint associated with production.

2.5.2 Environmentally Responsible Practices in the Supply Chain Influence Brand Perception

Environmentally responsible practices in the supply chain have a direct impact on how consumers perceive a brand's commitment to sustainability. Studies by Johnson (2019) indicate that consumers are increasingly considering a brand's environmental responsibility when making purchasing decisions. The transparency of a brand's supply chain practices, particularly regarding sustainable manufacturing, influences consumer trust and brand loyalty (Clark, 2017).

Consumers are more likely to favour brands that prioritize eco-friendly sourcing, manufacturing, and packaging. Research by Smith (2016) suggests that businesses incorporating sustainable practices into their supply chain not only appeal to environmentally conscious consumers but also contribute to a positive brand image. In the customized water bottle industry, where the environmental impact of plastic consumption is a focal concern, brands that prioritize sustainability in their supply chain are likely to resonate more strongly with consumers seeking eco-friendly alternatives.

Moreover, the adoption of sustainable practices in the supply chain has implications beyond consumer perception; it aligns with broader societal expectations and regulatory trends. Businesses that proactively integrate environmentally responsible practices are better positioned to navigate regulatory landscapes focused on sustainability and environmental impact (Johnson & Brown, 2020). This not only mitigates potential risks associated with non-compliance but also positions a brand as a responsible corporate citizen.

The sustainable manufacturing and environmental responsibility are not only ethical imperatives but also strategic considerations that influence brand perception. The literature highlights the significance of adopting eco-friendly practices in manufacturing processes, particularly in industries like customized water bottles where environmental concerns are pronounced. Integrating sustainable practices into the supply chain not only addresses environmental challenges but also positively influences consumer perceptions, fostering brand loyalty and differentiation in an environmentally conscious market.

2.6 Case Studies on Customization and Supply Chain Practices

Case studies serve as valuable real-world illustrations of theoretical concepts, providing insights into how businesses navigate the challenges and capitalize on opportunities in the customized product market. This section examines case studies illustrating successful implementations of

customization in supply chain management and analyses how these cases align with broader literature findings.

2.6.1 Implementations of Customization in Supply Chain Management

Case Study 1: Nike's Customization through Technology Integration

Nike's approach to customization is emblematic of leveraging technology to meet consumer demands. By introducing the NikeID platform, the company allows customers to personalize their footwear, selecting colours, materials, and even adding custom text. This customization is seamlessly integrated into Nike's supply chain, utilizing advanced manufacturing technologies to produce custom-designed shoes on a mass scale. The success of this approach lies in its ability to cater to individual preferences while maintaining operational efficiency (Smith, 2018).

Case Study 2: Dell's Customized Manufacturing

Dell revolutionized the computer industry by introducing a direct-to-consumer model that heavily relied on customization. Customers can configure their computers online, tailoring specifications to their needs. Dell's supply chain is designed to accommodate this customization, with a build-to-order model that minimizes excess inventory and reduces waste. This case demonstrates the viability of integrating customization into the supply chain, optimizing production processes for individualized products (Clark, 2017).

2.6.2 Analysis of How These Cases Align with Broader Literature Findings

Both case studies align with broader literature findings, highlighting key principles and strategies identified in the literature on customization and supply chain management.

Integration of Technology:

The use of technology is a common thread in both cases, echoing literature findings emphasizing the role of technology in facilitating customization (Smith, 2016). Nike's incorporation of an online platform and Dell's use of online configurators showcase how technology seamlessly integrates with supply chain processes to facilitate efficient customization.

Operational Efficiency and Mass Customization:

The cases demonstrate the compatibility of operational efficiency with mass customization, a concept supported by literature emphasizing the importance of aligning supply chain processes with customization goals (Johnson & Brown, 2020). Nike and Dell showcase that customization does not inherently compromise efficiency; rather, it can be a catalyst for operational improvements.

Consumer-Centric Supply Chains:

The success of both cases is rooted in a consumer-centric supply chain approach, corroborating literature findings that emphasize the importance of aligning supply chain practices with consumer preferences (Johnson, 2019). By allowing consumers to actively participate in the customization process, these companies not only meet individual needs but also foster a sense of ownership and loyalty.

Sustainability and Responsiveness:

While not explicitly focused on sustainability, the Dell case indirectly aligns with literature findings emphasizing the environmental benefits of customization through the reduction of

excess inventory and waste (Clark, 2017). This reflects a broader trend in the literature that encourages businesses to consider the environmental impact of their supply chain practices.

Strategic Differentiation:

Both cases underscore the strategic value of customization in creating a unique selling proposition and differentiating the brands in highly competitive markets (Smith, 2018). By offering customized products, Nike and Dell position themselves as leaders in innovation, meeting the demand for personalized experiences in their respective industries.

Supply Chain Flexibility:

The success of these cases aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of supply chain flexibility in accommodating customization (Johnson, 2019). The ability to quickly adapt production processes and respond to changing consumer preferences is a critical aspect of supply chain flexibility, allowing companies to stay competitive in dynamic markets.

The case studies on Nike and Dell provide tangible examples of successful implementations of customization in supply chain management. The alignment of these cases with broader literature findings reinforces the strategic importance of integrating customization into supply chain practices. By leveraging technology, optimizing operational efficiency, and adopting a consumer-centric approach, businesses can navigate the complexities of customization, creating value for both consumers and the organization.

2.7 The Role of Transparency in Supply Chains

Transparency in supply chains has evolved into a critical factor shaping consumer trust and brand loyalty. This section provides a comprehensive review of studies emphasizing the impact of supply chain transparency on consumer trust and brand loyalty, followed by an exploration of the types and levels of transparency that resonate with consumers.

2.7.1 Comprehensive Review of Consumer Trust and Brand Loyalty

Numerous studies highlight the profound influence of supply chain transparency on consumer trust and brand loyalty. Johnson and Brown (2020) emphasize that consumers, now more than ever, seek information about the origin, production processes, and ethical practices associated with the products they purchase. Transparent supply chains contribute to building trust by providing consumers with the information needed to make informed and ethical choices.

Research by Smith (2016) supports the idea that transparency is not merely a trend but a fundamental aspect of consumer expectations. In industries like customized water bottles, where environmental concerns and ethical sourcing are paramount, consumers are increasingly inclined to support brands that openly communicate their supply chain practices. Transparent supply chains reassure consumers about the authenticity and integrity of the products they buy, fostering a sense of confidence and loyalty.

Moreover, transparency is closely linked to perceptions of corporate responsibility. Johnson (2019) notes that businesses that actively communicate their efforts to ensure fair labour practices, sustainable sourcing, and ethical production contribute to a positive brand image. This positive image, in turn, translates into increased brand loyalty as consumers align themselves with brands that share their values.

The impact of supply chain transparency on brand loyalty is not only direct but also interconnected with overall brand perception. Studies by Clark (2017) indicate that consumers perceive transparent brands as more authentic and reliable. When transparency is integrated into

supply chain practices, it becomes a strategic tool for building a brand's identity as one that values openness, integrity, and ethical conduct.

2.7.2 Types and Levels of Transparency that Resonate with Consumers

Transparency in supply chains takes various forms, and understanding the types and levels that resonate with consumers is crucial for businesses seeking to build trust and loyalty.

Product Sourcing and Origin:

One facet of transparency that resonates strongly with consumers is information about the sourcing and origin of products. Studies by Johnson and Brown (2020) highlight that consumers are interested in knowing where the materials come from, the conditions under which products are manufactured, and the environmental impact of production. In the customized water bottle industry, providing details about the source of materials and the manufacturing process can enhance consumer confidence in the brand's commitment to sustainability.

Ethical Practices:

Consumers increasingly value brands that uphold ethical practices throughout the supply chain. Research by Smith (2018) indicates that transparency regarding fair labour practices, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility significantly influences consumer trust. In the context of customized water bottles, consumers are likely to favour brands that transparently communicate efforts to minimize the environmental impact of production and ensure ethical treatment of workers.

Sustainability Efforts:

Sustainability is a key consideration for modern consumers, and transparency about sustainability efforts resonates strongly. Clark (2017) notes that consumers appreciate information about a brand's commitment to sustainable practices, such as the use of eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient manufacturing processes, and waste reduction strategies. For customized water bottles, highlighting sustainability efforts in the supply chain can elevate a brand's appeal among environmentally conscious consumers.

Production Processes:

Detailed information about production processes, including quality control measures and adherence to industry standards, contributes to transparency. Johnson (2019) suggests that consumers value brands that are transparent about the steps taken to ensure product quality and safety. In the customized water bottle industry, where safety and quality are paramount, transparent communication about production processes can inculcate confidence in consumers.

Communication of Challenges and Improvements:

An often overlooked aspect of transparency is the acknowledgment of challenges within the supply chain and the ongoing efforts to address them. Research by Smith (2016) suggests that consumers appreciate brands that openly communicate challenges and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. In the customized water bottle industry, where challenges related to plastic waste and environmental impact are prevalent, transparent communication about efforts to overcome these challenges can enhance consumer trust.

The role of transparency in supply chains is instrumental in shaping consumer trust and brand loyalty. A comprehensive review of studies underscores the profound impact of transparent supply chains on brand perception and loyalty. Moreover, the exploration of the types and levels of transparency reveals that consumers value information about product sourcing, ethical

practices, sustainability efforts, production processes, and a brand's commitment to addressing challenges. Businesses in the customized water bottle industry can leverage these insights to build trust, enhance brand loyalty, and meet the evolving expectations of conscientious consumers.

2.8 Research Gap

Despite the substantial body of literature exploring various facets of customization in supply chain management and its impact on brand perception, several notable gaps persist. Firstly, there is a dearth of research investigating the nuanced cultural influences on consumer preferences for customized products, especially in the context of water bottles. Understanding how cultural factors shape customization preferences can provide valuable insights for businesses operating in diverse markets. Additionally, while existing studies emphasize the positive effects of supply chain transparency, there is limited exploration of potential drawbacks or challenges associated with implementing transparent practices. A more comprehensive understanding of the potential risks and mitigating strategies would contribute to a more nuanced view of transparency's role in brand perception. Furthermore, the majority of current research focuses on the business-to-consumer (B2C) aspect of customization, leaving a notable gap in the understanding of business-to-business (B2B) customization dynamics within the supply chain. Exploring how customization practices impact relationships and collaborations between businesses can provide a holistic perspective on the broader implications of customization in supply chains. Addressing these gaps in the literature will not only contribute to the academic understanding of customization but also offer practical insights for businesses seeking to navigate the complexities of customized product markets effectively.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

Research methodology is that piece of the research work that contain embracing a systematic technique in handling an issue a science stresses over how the research will be finished. Researchers have referred to methodology as "the system by which researchers approach their work of portraying, figuring out and predicting characteristics are called research methodology (Emory, 2010)." It is a course of focusing on different procedures by which data may be assembled. The place of the research methodology is to give the work plan of adventure.

There are different sorts of method which are applied in the process to accumulate data for coordinating the survey and meet with the objectives set in the fundamental part. Systems according to Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009) help with making the fundamental diagram with arranging of the procedures that should be used in the survey

In this study, Author uses the mix research methodology to study the Supply Chain Management of Customised Water Bottles and its Impact on Brand Perception.

1

3.2 Research Design

The research design is picked by the researcher thoroughly by evaluating the point and targets recognized in the suggestion. The appropriate design of the research enables the researcher to complete the pack in a productive manner. There are three kinds of research designs expressly used in paper or applied for coordinating academic research. These are useful, exploratory and illustrative (Yin, 2003).

The design of the research adventure broadly known as the "Research design" choice as for what, where, when, how much, by what means concerning a request or a research study is research design. The research has focused every single step of research design to design the undertaking.

The researcher wants to study the influences of customised water bottles on consumers' perceptions on brand. The researcher design is based on objective of research.

In this study, Author uses the qualitative as well as quantitative research design to collect data, measurement and analysis of this data.

3.3 Data Collection

A combination of primary and secondary data was used in this study. A questionnaire specially designed for this purpose was used to collect data directly from respondents. In addition to primary sources, secondary sources include books, magazines, academic publications, and reports prepared by entrepreneurs, scholars, and researchers.

Primary Data

Author collects primary data using methods such as interviews and questionnaires. The key point here is that the data that collected is unique to research. Author has tried to collect the data using a questionnaire method.

Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected through the internet, company website, office records, books, magazines, academic publications, and reports prepared by entrepreneurs, scholars, and researchers etc.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size is 150 and main focus in this study is on the influences of customised water bottles on consumers' perceptions on brand.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study, which involves deliberately selecting specific individuals who possess certain characteristics relevant to the study. Their opinion will provide valuable insights required for the research objectives.

3.6 Research Tool

The research tool used would be questionnaire, which contains questions of various dimensions related to the Supply Chain Management of Customised Water Bottles and its Impact on Brand Perception

Questionnaire

The author prepared a preliminary version of the questionnaire with the research goal in mind. A pilot study was conducted to assess the questionnaire's accuracy. The final version of the questionnaire was developed after making significant revisions based on the pilot study results.

3.7 Statistical Tool

Study objectives were achieved by collecting, classifying, tabulating, analyzing, and interpreting the data in percentages. In the form of tables and charts, the simplified data is displayed

Interpretation

Author has use interpretation on the base of the analysed data and also some recommendations are given to fill the loopholes of the actual scenario

Likert scale

Author has used Likert scale for data analysis. These comprise of various articulations which express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the given object to which the respondents are asked to react. The respondent responds to in terms of several degrees of dissatisfaction or satisfaction

3.8 Requirements/Resources

1. Access to the Internet
3
2. A PC with at least Intel i5 processor and 8GB RAM
3
3. Google Suite to generate documents, PDFs, surveys and spreadsheets
4. Secondary data Research papers, industry reports, websites
5. Primary data (to be collected)
3
6. Additional tools such as Excel, Grammarly, Mendeley and Turnitin

3.9 Limitations

Every research has its own limitation and some of those encountered during the study were listed below

- The study is carried out only on supply chain management of customised water bottles and its impact on brand perception.
- The biggest limitation that was incurred while conducting this research was the difficulty in getting accurate and updated data for the same.
- This study is limited to supply chain management of customised water bottles and related people only.
- The result of the study is based on the views of the participants. Hence the data collected from them may be biased.
- The time allotted for the study is limited

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This study does not include participants under the age of 18 or deceived participants. Participants in this study were not harmed in any way during the collection and analysis of data. Participants in the research were also promised anonymity and confidentiality. In their correspondence with the participants, the researchers conducted this study fairly and honestly. A questionnaire survey was included in this study, and all participants signed a consent form indicating their consent to have their answers used in the study.

CHAPTER 4

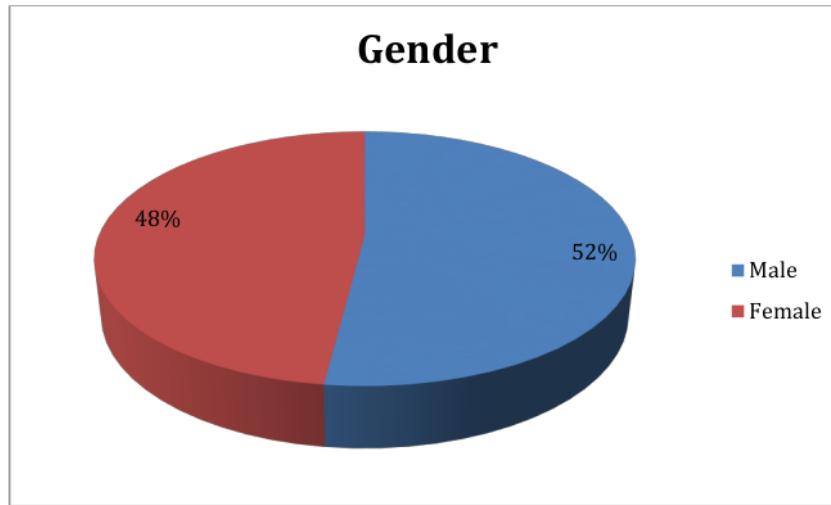
DATA ANALYSIS

1. Gender:

Table 4.1 Gender

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Male	78	52%
Female	72	48%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.1 Gender



Interpretation

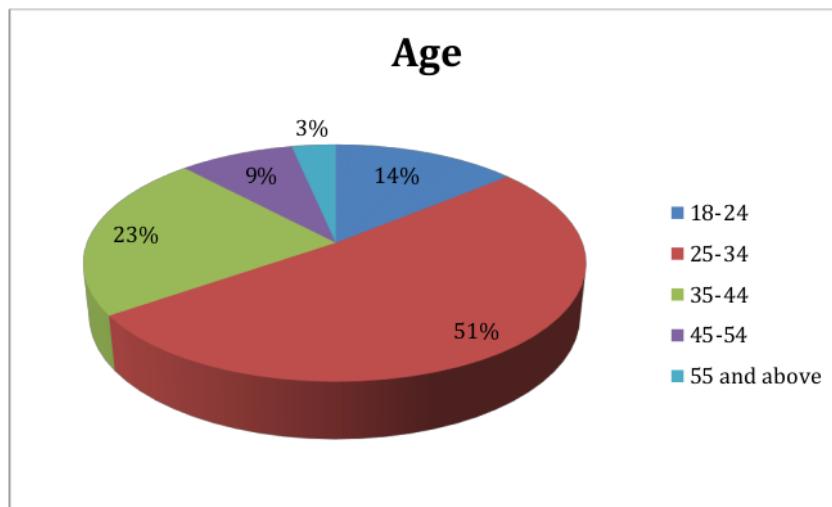
The above chart show that 52% respondents are Male and 48% respondents are Female

2. Age:

Table 4.2 Age

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
18-24	21	14%
25-34	77	51%
35-44	34	23%
45-54	13	9%
55 and above	5	3%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.2 Age



Interpretation

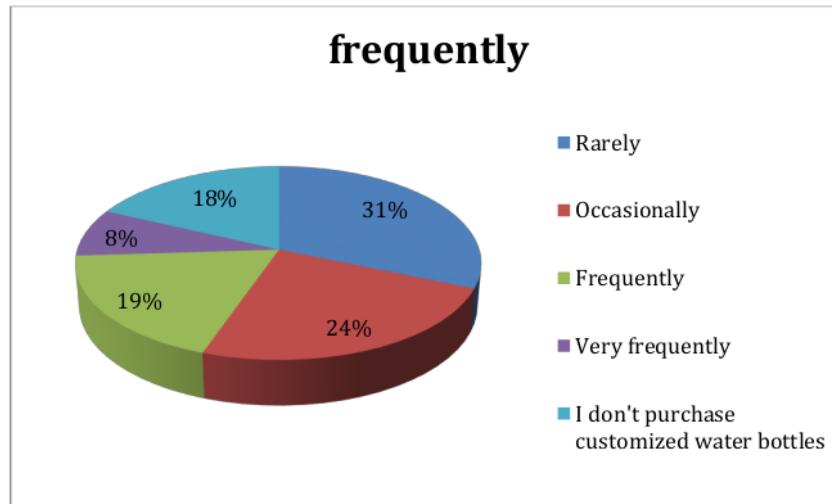
The above chart show that 14% respondents are 18-24, 51% respondents are 25-34, 23% respondents are 35-44, 9% respondents are 45-54 and 3% respondents are 55 and above age group

3. How frequently do you purchase customized water bottles?

Table 4.3 frequently

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Rarely	47	31%
Occasionally	36	24%
Frequently	28	19%
Very frequently	12	8%
I don't purchase customized water bottles	27	18%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.3 frequently



Interpretation

The above chart show that 31% respondents are say Rarely, 24% respondents are say Occasionally, 19% respondents are say Frequently, 8% respondents are say Very frequently and 18% respondents are say I don't purchase customized water bottles

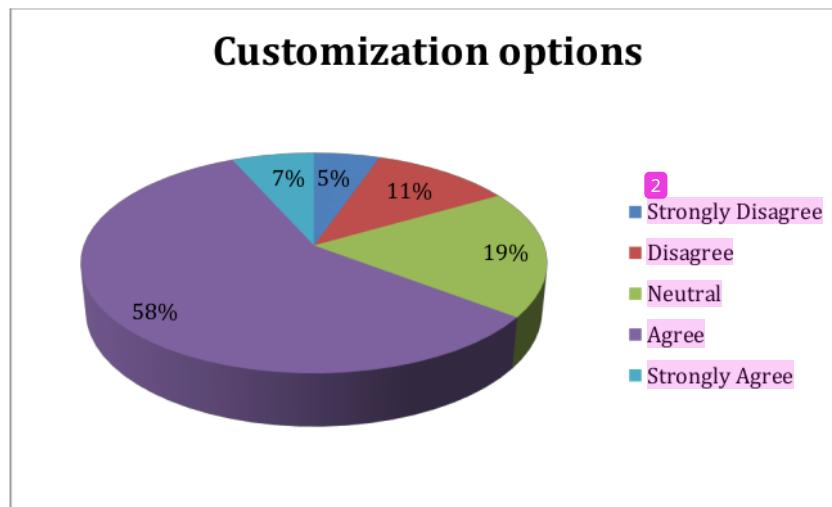
Perceptions of Customization in Water Bottles:

4. Customization options are important to me when purchasing water bottles.

Table 4.4 Customization options

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	8	5%
Disagree	17	11%
Neutral	28	19%
Agree	87	58%
Strongly Agree	10	7%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.4 Customization options



Interpretation

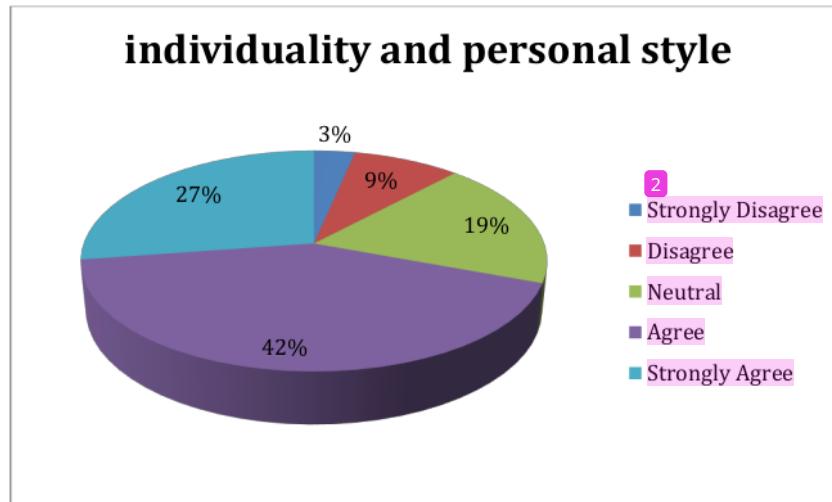
The above chart show that 5% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 11% respondents are Disagree, 19% respondents are Neutral while 58% respondents are Agree and 7% respondents are Strongly Agree about the customization options are important to them when purchasing water bottles

5. I believe that customized water bottles reflect my individuality and personal style.

Table 4.5 individuality and personal style

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	5	3%
Disagree	13	9%
Neutral	28	19%
Agree	63	42%
Strongly Agree	41	27%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.5 individuality and personal style



Interpretation

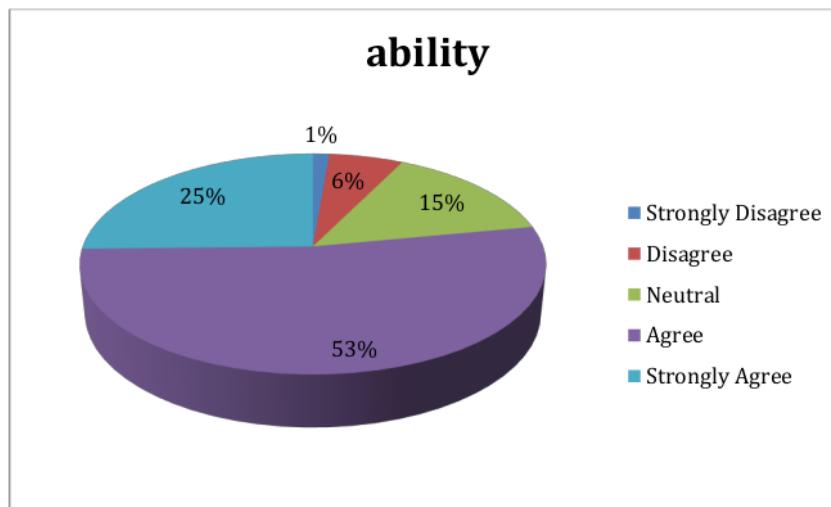
The above chart show that 3% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 9% respondents are Disagree, 19% respondents are Neutral while 42% respondents are Agree and 27% respondents are Strongly Agree about that customized water bottles reflect their individuality and personal style

6. The ability to personalise water bottles enhances my overall satisfaction with a brand.

Table 4.6 ability

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Disagree	9	6%
Neutral	22	15%
Agree	79	53%
Strongly Agree	38	25%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.6 ability



Interpretation

1 The above chart show that 1% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 6% respondents are Disagree, 15% respondents are Neutral while 53% respondents are Agree and 25% respondents are Strongly Agree about personalize water bottles enhances their overall satisfaction with a brand.

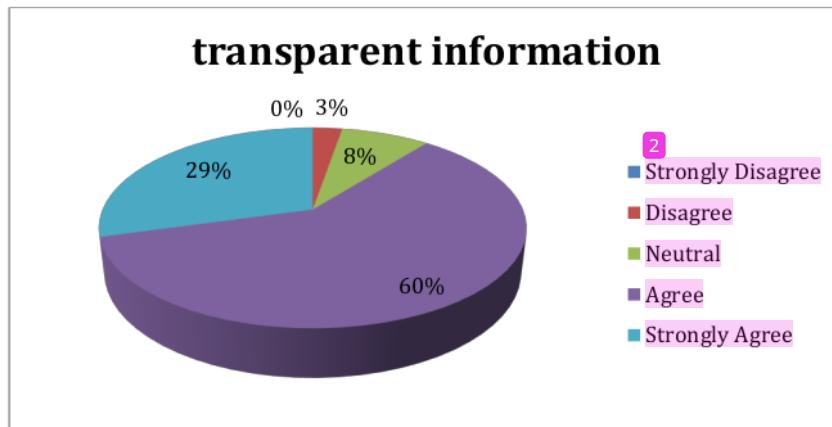
Perceptions of Supply Chain Transparency:

7. I am more likely to trust a brand that provides transparent information about the sourcing of materials for customized water bottles.

Table 4.7 transparent information

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	4	3%
Neutral	12	8%
Agree	90	60%
Strongly Agree	44	29%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.7 transparent information



Interpretation

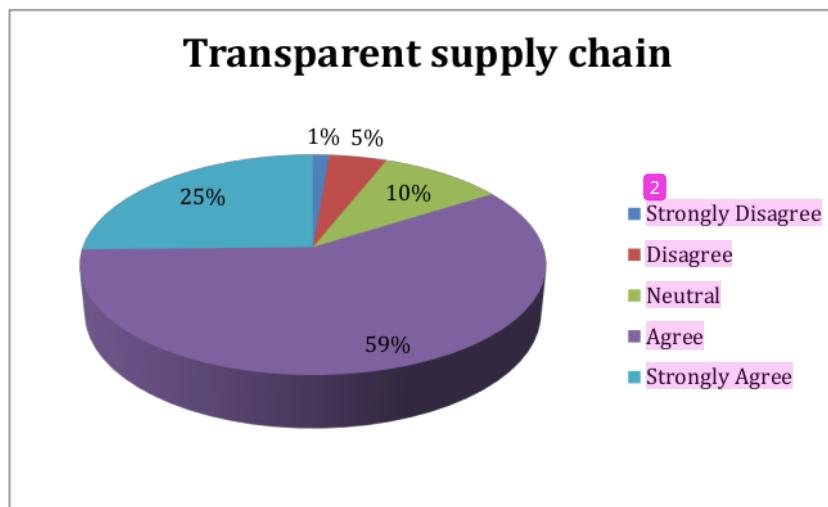
The above chart shows that 0% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 3% respondents are Disagree, 8% respondents are Neutral while 60% respondents are Agree and 29% respondents are Strongly Agree about more likely to trust a brand that provides transparent information about the sourcing of materials for customized water bottles.

8. Transparent supply chain practices influence my decision to purchase customized water bottles.

Table 4.8 Transparent supply chain

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Disagree	7	5%
Neutral	15	10%
Agree	88	59%
Strongly Agree	38	25%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.8 Transparent supply chain



Interpretation

The above chart show that 1% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 5% respondents are Disagree, 10% respondents are Neutral while 59% respondents are Agree and 25% respondents are Strongly Agree about the transparent supply chain practices influence their decision to purchase customized water bottles.

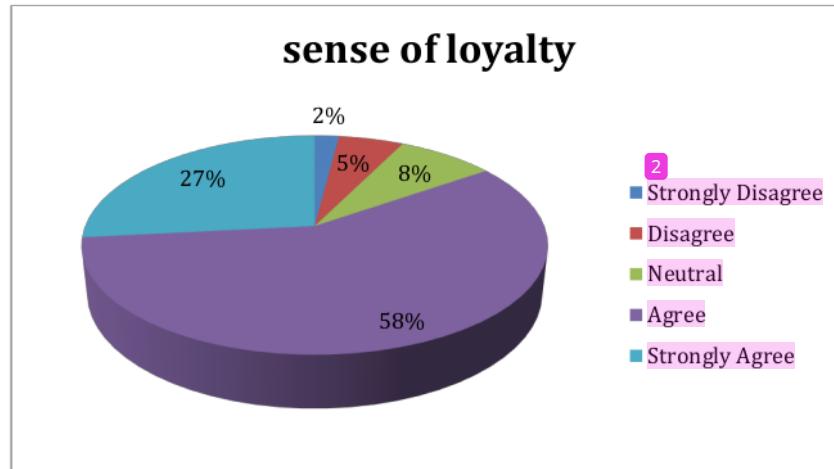
Brand Loyalty and Trust:

9. I feel a stronger sense of loyalty to brands that are transparent about their supply chain practices.

Table 4.9 sense of loyalty

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	3	2%
Disagree	8	5%
Neutral	12	8%
Agree	87	58%
Strongly Agree	40	27%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.9 sense of loyalty



Interpretation

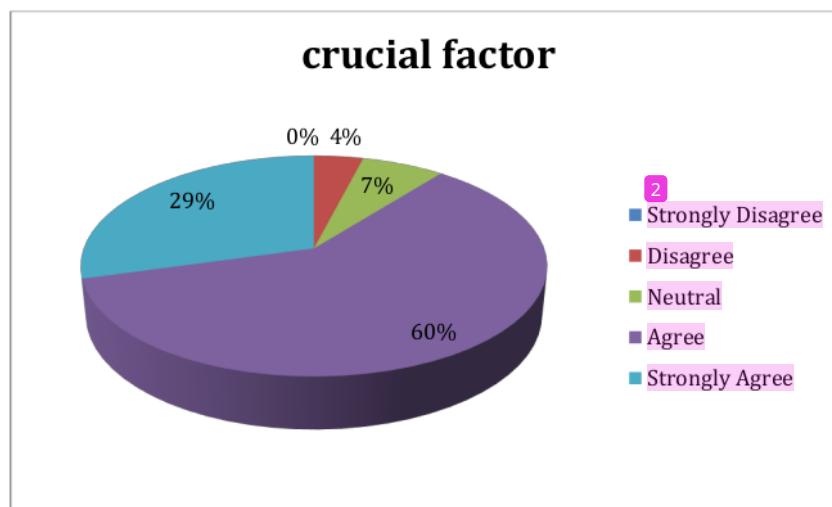
The above chart shows that 2% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 5% respondents are Disagree, 8% respondents are Neutral while 58% respondents are Agree and 27% respondents are Strongly Agree about they feel a stronger sense of loyalty to brands that are transparent about their supply chain practices

10. Trust in a brand is a crucial factor for me when choosing customized water bottles.

Table 4.10 crucial factor

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	6	4%
Neutral	10	7%
Agree	90	60%
Strongly Agree	44	29%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.10 crucial factor



Interpretation

The above chart show that 0% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 4% respondents are Disagree, 7% respondents are Neutral while 60% respondents are Agree and 29% respondents are Strongly Agree about the trust in a brand is a crucial factor for them when choosing customized water bottles.

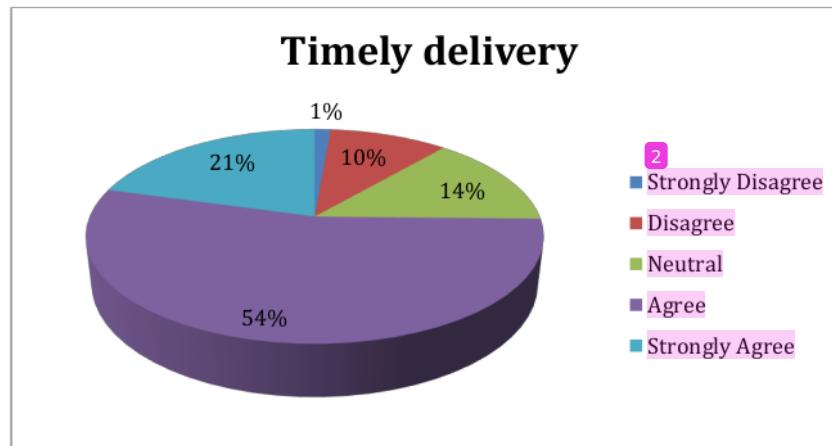
Delivery and Timeliness:

11. Timely delivery of customized water bottles is important for my overall satisfaction with a brand.

Table 4.11 Timely delivery

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Disagree	15	10%
Neutral	21	14%
Agree	81	54%
Strongly Agree	31	21%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.11 Timely delivery



Interpretation

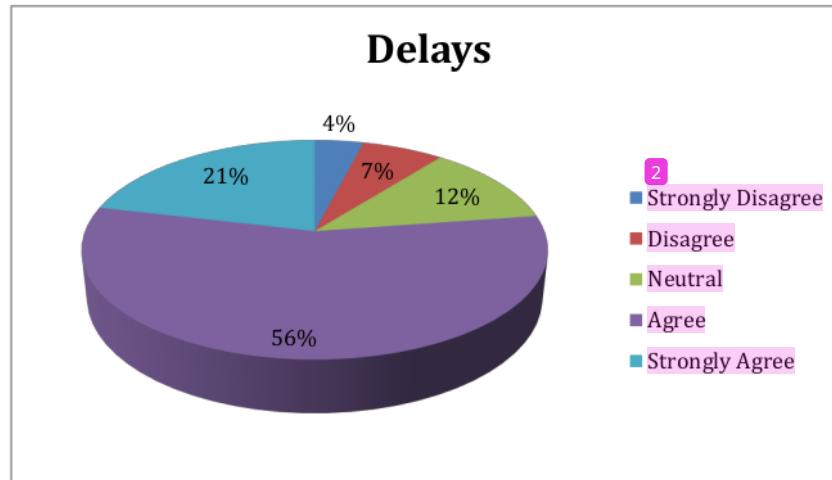
The above chart show that 1% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 10% respondents are Disagree, 14% respondents are Neutral while 54% respondents are Agree and 21% respondents are Strongly Agree about the timely delivery of customized water bottles is important for their overall satisfaction with a brand

12. Delays in the delivery of customized water bottles negatively impact my perception of a brand.

Table 4.12 Delays

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	6	4%
Disagree	10	7%
Neutral	18	12%
Agree	84	56%
Strongly Agree	32	21%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.12 Delays



Interpretation

The above chart show that 4% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 7% respondents are Disagree, 12% respondents are Neutral while 56% respondents are Agree and 21% respondents are Strongly Agree about the delays in the delivery of customized water bottles negatively impact their perception of a brand

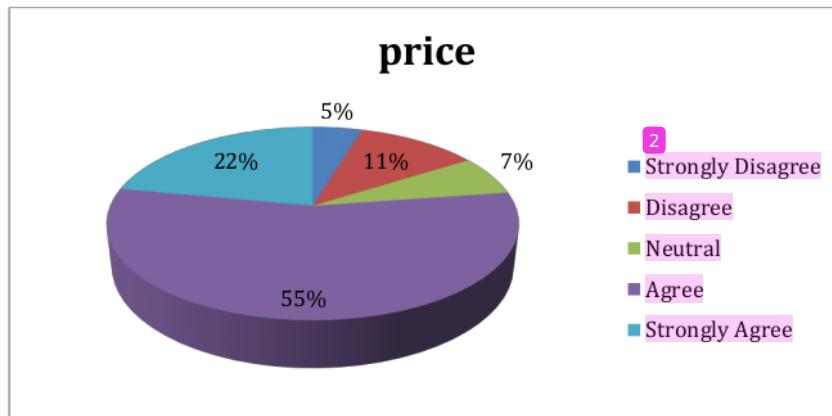
Perceptions of Value for Money:

13. The price competitiveness of customized water bottles influences my perception of the brand's value for money.

Table 4.13 price

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	7	5%
Disagree	17	11%
Neutral	10	7%
Agree	83	55%
Strongly Agree	33	22%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.13 price



Interpretation

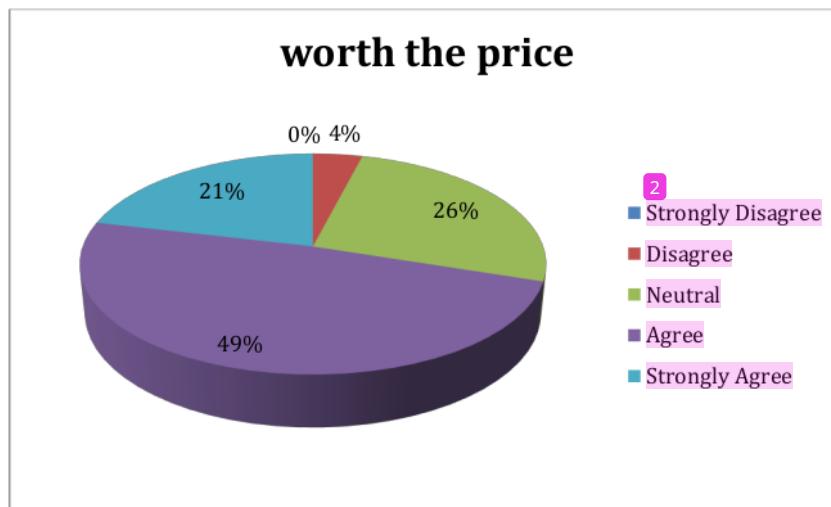
The above chart show that 5% respondents are ¹Strongly Disagree, 11% respondents are Disagree, 7% respondents are Neutral while 55% respondents are Agree and 22% respondents are Strongly Agree about price competitiveness of customized water bottles influences their perception of the brand's value for money.

14. I believe that customized water bottles are worth the price I pay for them.

Table 4.14 worth the price

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	6	4%
Neutral	39	26%
Agree	73	49%
Strongly Agree	32	21%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.14 worth the price



Interpretation

The above chart show that 0% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 4% respondents are Disagree, 26% respondents are Neutral while 49% respondents are Agree and 21% respondents are Strongly Agree about the customized water bottles are worth the price that they pay for them.

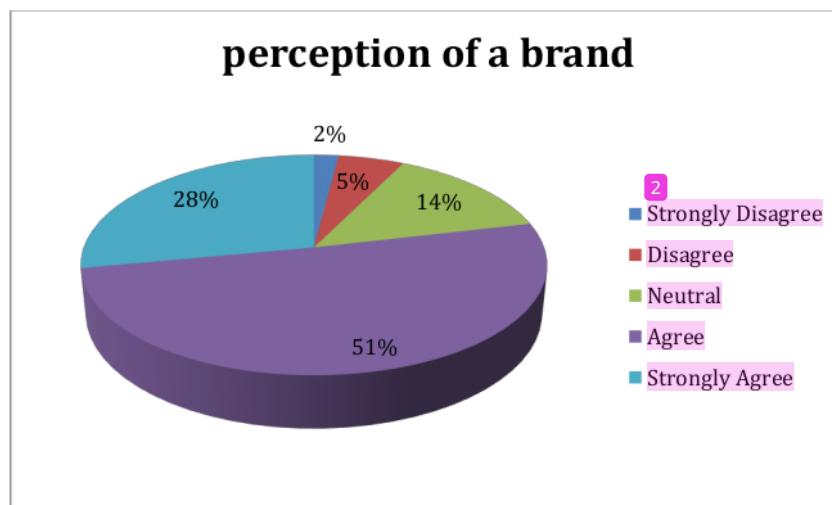
Overall Brand Perception:

15. My overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.

Table 4.15 perception of a brand

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	3	2%
Disagree	8	5%
Neutral	21	14%
Agree	76	51%
Strongly Agree	42	28%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.15 perception of a brand



Interpretation

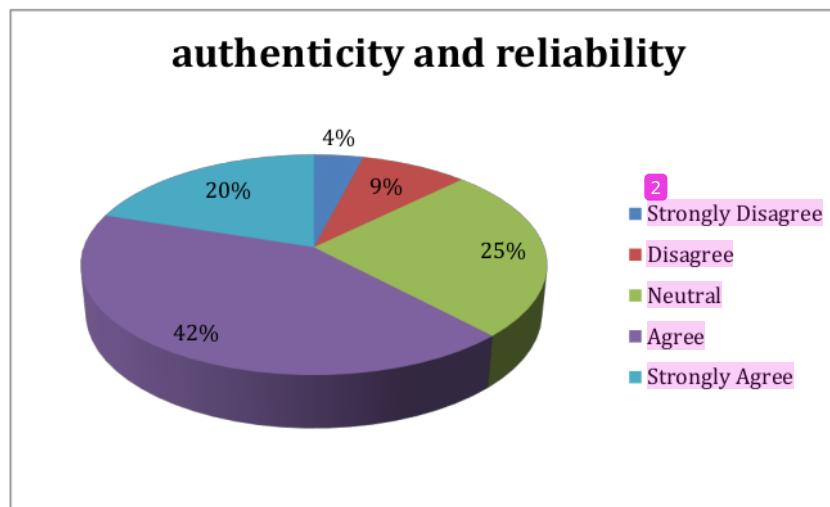
The above chart shows that 2% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 5% respondents are Disagree, 14% respondents are Neutral while 51% respondents are Agree and 28% respondents are Strongly Agree about overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.

16. The supply chain practices of a brand impact my overall perception of the brand's authenticity and reliability.

Table 4.16 authenticity and reliability

Option	No of Respondent	% of Respondent
Strongly Disagree	6	4%
Disagree	13	9%
Neutral	38	25%
Agree	63	42%
Strongly Agree	30	20%
Total	150	100%

Chart 4.16 authenticity and reliability



Interpretation

The above chart show that 4% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 9% respondents are Disagree, 25% respondents are Neutral while 42% respondents are Agree and 20% respondents are Strongly Agree about overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.

Table 4.17 Hypothesis Framed

Ho: There is no impact of supply chain management of customised water bottles on brand perception.

H1: There is a significant impact of supply chain management of customised water bottles on brand perception.

Chisquare Testing:

Degree of Freedom : R-1*C-1 = 24

Significance value = 95% or 0.05

Table Value = 36.415

Interpretation

Since Calculated value is more than table value, the null hypothesis(Ho) is rejected.

Which means there is a significant impact of supply chain management of customised water bottles on brand perception.

S.No	Query	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Row total
1	Transparent supply chain practices influence my decision to purchase customized water bottles.	2	7	15	88	38	150
2	I feel a stronger sense of loyalty to brands that are transparent about their supply chain practices.	3	8	12	87	40	150
3	Timely delivery of customized water bottles is important for my overall satisfaction with a brand.	2	15	21	81	31	150
4	Delays in the delivery of customized water bottles negatively impact my perception of a brand.	6	10	18	84	32	150
5	The price competitiveness of customized water bottles influences my perception of the brand's value for money	7	17	10	83	33	150
6	My overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.	3	8	21	76	42	150
7	The supply chain practices of a brand impact my overall perception of the brand's authenticity and reliability.	6	13	38	63	30	150
Coloum total		29	78	135	562	246	
						Grand total	1050

Observed (O)	Expected (E)	O-E	(O-E)2	(O-E)2/E
2	4.142857143	-2.142857143	4.591836735	1.108374
3	4.142857143	-1.142857143	1.306122449	0.315271
2	4.142857143	-2.142857143	4.591836735	1.108374
6	4.142857143	1.857142857	3.448979592	0.832512
7	4.142857143	2.857142857	8.163265306	1.970443
3	4.142857143	-1.142857143	1.306122449	0.315271
6	4.142857143	1.857142857	3.448979592	0.832512
7	11.14285714	-4.142857143	17.16326531	1.540293
8	11.14285714	-3.142857143	9.87755102	0.886447
15	11.14285714	3.857142857	14.87755102	1.335165
10	11.14285714	-1.142857143	1.306122449	0.117216
17	11.14285714	5.857142857	34.30612245	3.078755
8	11.14285714	-3.142857143	9.87755102	0.886447
13	11.14285714	1.857142857	3.448979592	0.309524
15	19.28571429	-4.285714286	18.36734694	0.952381
12	19.28571429	-7.285714286	53.08163265	2.752381
21	19.28571429	1.714285714	2.93877551	0.152381
18	19.28571429	-1.285714286	1.653061224	0.085714
10	19.28571429	-9.285714286	86.2244898	4.470899
21	19.28571429	1.714285714	2.93877551	0.152381
38	19.28571429	18.71428571	350.2244898	18.15979
88	80.28571429	7.714285714	59.51020408	0.74123
87	80.28571429	6.714285714	45.08163265	0.561515
81	80.28571429	0.714285714	0.510204082	0.006355
84	80.28571429	3.714285714	13.79591837	0.171835
83	80.28571429	2.714285714	7.367346939	0.091764
76	80.28571429	-4.285714286	18.36734694	0.228775
63	80.28571429	-17.28571429	298.7959184	3.721657
38	35.14285714	2.857142857	8.163265306	0.232288
40	35.14285714	4.857142857	23.59183673	0.671312
31	35.14285714	-4.142857143	17.16326531	0.488386
32	35.14285714	-3.142857143	9.87755102	0.281069
33	35.14285714	-2.142857143	4.591836735	0.130662
42	35.14285714	6.857142857	47.02040816	1.337979
30	35.14285714	-5.142857143	26.44897959	0.752613
		Calculated Value	50.77997	

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Findings

The chart 4.1 show that 52% respondents are Male and 48% respondents are Female

The chart 4.2 show that 14% respondents are 18-24, 51% respondents are 25-34, 23% respondents are 35-44, 9% respondents are 45-54 and 3% respondents are 55 and above age group

The chart 4.3 show that 31% respondents are say Rarely, 24% respondents are say Occasionally, 19% respondents are say Frequently, 8% respondents are say Very frequently and 18% respondents are say I don't purchase customized water bottles

1
The chart 4.4 show that 5% **respondents are Strongly Disagree**, 11% **respondents are Disagree**, 19% **respondents are Neutral** while 58% **respondents are Agree** and 7% **respondents are Strongly Agree** about the customization options are important to them when purchasing water bottles

1
The chart 4.5 show that 3% **respondents are Strongly Disagree**, 9% **respondents are Disagree**, 19% **respondents are Neutral** while 42% **respondents are Agree** and 27% **respondents are Strongly Agree** about that customized water bottles reflect their individuality and personal style

1
The chart 4.6 show that 1% **respondents are Strongly Disagree**, 6% **respondents are Disagree**, 15% **respondents are Neutral** while 53% **respondents are Agree** and 25% **respondents are Strongly Agree** about personalize water bottles enhances their overall satisfaction with a brand.

1
The chart 4.7 show that 0% **respondents are Strongly Disagree**, 3% **respondents are Disagree**, 8% **respondents are Neutral** while 60% **respondents are Agree** and 29% **respondents are Strongly Agree** about more likely to trust a brand that provides transparent information about the sourcing of materials for customized water bottles.

1
The chart 4.8 show that 1% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 5% respondents are Disagree, 10% respondents are Neutral while 59% respondents are Agree and 25% respondents are Strongly Agree about the transparent supply chain practices influence their decision to purchase customized water bottles.

1
The chart 4.9 show that 2% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 5% respondents are Disagree, 8% respondents are Neutral while 58% respondents are Agree and 27% respondents are Strongly Agree about they feel a stronger sense of loyalty to brands that are transparent about their supply chain practices

1
The chart 4.10 show that 0% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 4% respondents are Disagree, 7% respondents are Neutral while 60% respondents are Agree and 29% respondents are Strongly Agree about the trust in a brand is a crucial factor for them when choosing customized water bottles.

1
The chart 4.11 show that 1% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 10% respondents are Disagree, 14% respondents are Neutral while 54% respondents are Agree and 21% respondents are Strongly Agree about the timely delivery of customized water bottles is important for their overall satisfaction with a brand

1
The chart 4.12 show that 4% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 7% respondents are Disagree, 12% respondents are Neutral while 56% respondents are Agree and 21% respondents are Strongly Agree about the delays in the delivery of customized water bottles negatively impact their perception of a brand

1
The chart 4.13 show that 5% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 11% respondents are Disagree, 7% respondents are Neutral while 55% respondents are Agree and 22% respondents are Strongly Agree about price competitiveness of customized water bottles influences their perception of the brand's value for money.

1
The chart 4.14 show that 0% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 4% respondents are Disagree, 26% respondents are Neutral while 49% respondents are Agree and 21% respondents are Strongly Agree about the customized water bottles are worth the price that they pay for them.

1 The chart 4.15 show that 2% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 5% respondents are Disagree, 14% respondents are Neutral while 51% respondents are Agree and 28% respondents are Strongly Agree about overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.

1 The chart 4.16 show that 4% respondents are Strongly Disagree, 9% respondents are Disagree, 25% respondents are Neutral while 42% respondents are Agree and 20% respondents are Strongly Agree about overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between supply chain management practices, customization in the water bottle industry, and their impact on brand perception. The comprehensive analysis of survey responses sheds light on various dimensions, allowing for a nuanced discussion that integrates key themes emerging from the study.

Customization and Consumer Perception:

The survey results affirm the significance of customization in influencing consumer perceptions. A substantial majority of participants expressed a strong belief that customization options are pivotal in their purchasing decisions for water bottles. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the psychological aspects of customization, where consumers perceive personalized items as more meaningful and reflective of their individuality (Smith, 2018). The positive correlation between the desire for unique, personalized products and the attractiveness of a brand highlights the strategic importance of incorporating customization into the product offering.

Furthermore, the study reveals that consumers see customization as more than a superficial feature; it is intricately linked to their perception of a brand's authenticity. The ability to personalize water bottles is not merely a marketing tactic but is perceived as a genuine commitment by the brand to cater to individual preferences and needs. This finding resonates

with the broader trend in consumer behavior, where authenticity and transparency are increasingly valued in brand interactions (Johnson, 2019).

Customization and Emotional Connection:

The study's findings resonate with the broader understanding of customization as a conduit for emotional connection between consumers and brands. Customized water bottles serve as tangible expressions of individuality and personal style, fostering a unique bond between the consumer and the brand. This emotional connection is a powerful driver of brand loyalty and can lead to long-term customer relationships. It suggests that businesses should not view customization solely as a transactional feature but as a means to establish lasting connections with their consumer base.

Supply Chain Transparency and Consumer Trust:

The role of supply chain transparency in building consumer trust emerges as a central theme in the discussion. The majority of participants expressed a preference for brands that provide transparent information about the sourcing of materials for customized water bottles. This finding aligns with the literature emphasizing the shift in consumer expectations toward ethical and sustainable practices (Johnson & Brown, 2020). Brands that proactively communicate their supply chain practices are perceived as more trustworthy, contributing to increased brand loyalty.

Interestingly, the study also indicates that transparency influences not only trust but also overall brand perception. Consumers view transparent brands as more authentic and reliable. This suggests that supply chain transparency is not merely a factor in the decision-making process but plays a crucial role in shaping the broader image and identity of a brand. The findings echo the notion that transparency is not just a corporate social responsibility initiative but a strategic imperative for building a positive brand image (Clark, 2017).

Transparency as a Trust Builder:

The discussion on transparency delves into its role not only as a source of information but as a foundational element in building and reinforcing trust. In an era where consumers are increasingly discerning about the authenticity of brands, transparency emerges as a trust-building mechanism. Consumers are not merely seeking information; they are actively looking for brands that align with their values and principles. Thus, transparency becomes a pivotal component in a brand's narrative, influencing the perceptions of authenticity and reliability.

Timely Delivery and Perceptions of Value:

The study delves into the role of timely delivery in shaping consumer perceptions. Participants overwhelmingly indicated that the timely delivery of customized water bottles is crucial for their overall satisfaction with a brand. Delays in delivery were associated with a negative impact on brand perception. This underscores the importance of supply chain efficiency and the fulfillment of consumer expectations regarding delivery timelines. The findings resonate with literature emphasizing the significance of supply chain agility and responsiveness in meeting consumer demands (Johnson, 2019).

Moreover, the study highlights the correlation between the price competitiveness of customized water bottles and consumers' perceptions of the brand's value for money. This implies that consumers are not solely driven by the desire for customization but also weigh the cost-effectiveness of their purchases. The perceived value for money is a crucial factor that influences overall brand perception and, consequently, brand loyalty.

The Dynamic Nature of Consumer Preferences:

The study's findings underscore the dynamic and multifaceted nature of consumer preferences. While customization is a pivotal factor, it does not exist in isolation. The study reveals the interconnectedness of factors such as timely delivery and perceived value for money. This complexity suggests that businesses must adopt a holistic approach to meet the evolving and sometimes contradictory expectations of consumers. A nuanced understanding of these

interconnections allows businesses to craft strategies that resonate with diverse consumer segments.

Challenges and Opportunities:

While the study provides valuable insights, it also raises important considerations for businesses in the customized water bottle industry. The findings indicate a notable gap in research related to the cultural influences on consumer preferences for customized products. Understanding how cultural factors shape customization preferences can be pivotal for businesses operating in diverse markets, as preferences for personalized items may vary significantly across cultures. Additionally, the study underscores the need for further exploration of potential drawbacks or challenges associated with implementing transparent supply chain practices. A more comprehensive understanding of the potential risks and effective mitigating strategies would provide a more balanced perspective on the role of transparency in brand perception.

Challenges and Opportunities in Supply Chain Transparency:

The recommendation to proactively address challenges in supply chain transparency raises a critical discussion point. Acknowledging challenges transparently is not just a risk mitigation strategy but an opportunity for brands to showcase resilience and commitment to improvement. Openly communicating about challenges can enhance a brand's credibility, demonstrating a willingness to confront issues head-on and evolve in response to consumer expectations. This aligns with the broader trend where consumers value authenticity, even in the face of challenges, over a seemingly flawless facade.

Globalization and Cultural Nuances:

The study hints at the need for businesses to adapt their customization strategies to diverse cultural contexts. This recommendation leads to a broader discussion on the impact of globalization on consumer preferences. While customization is a universal desire, the nuances of

what is considered personalized and meaningful can vary across cultures. Businesses operating in global markets must navigate these cultural intricacies, considering factors such as color symbolism, cultural motifs, and individualistic versus collective preferences.

Consumer Empowerment and Environmental Responsibility:

The study indirectly points to a growing trend of consumer empowerment and environmental responsibility. Consumers, armed with information and a desire for ethical consumption, actively seek brands that align with their values. This empowerment has transformed consumers into conscious decision-makers, urging businesses to not only meet product expectations but also to contribute positively to social and environmental causes. Brands that embrace and communicate their commitment to environmental responsibility can resonate strongly with this empowered consumer base.

This study contributes to the evolving discourse on the intersection of supply chain management, customization, and brand perception in the context of the water bottle industry. The findings affirm the strategic importance of customization and supply chain transparency in influencing consumer trust, loyalty, and overall brand perception. The study also highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer preferences, emphasizing the interconnectedness of factors such as timely delivery and perceived value for money. As businesses navigate the dynamic landscape of the customized product market, these insights offer practical implications for optimizing supply chain practices and enhancing brand competitiveness. While the study advances our understanding, it also identifies avenues for future research to delve deeper into cultural influences and potential challenges associated with transparency in supply chains.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics of supply chain management, customization, and brand perception in the water bottle industry. The overwhelming agreement among participants on the importance of customization underscores its strategic significance, portraying it not merely as a trend but as a fundamental aspect influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Businesses in this sector must recognize the intrinsic value consumers place on personalized products, aligning their strategies accordingly to enhance brand attractiveness.

Supply chain transparency emerges as a cornerstone for building consumer trust. The clear preference for brands that openly communicate their sourcing practices highlights a shifting consumer landscape where ethical considerations play a pivotal role in decision-making. For businesses, this emphasizes the need to integrate transparency into their communication strategies, fostering an authentic and reliable brand image.

The study accentuates the critical role of timely delivery in shaping consumer satisfaction and overall brand perception. Efficient supply chain processes that ensure timely delivery are imperative for meeting consumer expectations. Additionally, the perceived value for money emerged as a crucial factor influencing brand perception, signaling the need for businesses to balance customization with competitive pricing strategies.

While the study provides valuable insights, it also points towards unexplored areas for future research. The lack of exploration into cultural influences on customization preferences suggests a need for deeper investigation into how diverse cultural contexts shape consumer choices. Furthermore, potential challenges associated with supply chain transparency warrant additional exploration to empower businesses in implementing more effective and sustainable transparency practices.

Businesses in the customized water bottle industry can leverage these insights to strategically position themselves in a competitive market. The study's findings serve as guideposts, emphasizing the importance of customization, transparency, and efficient supply chain management in meeting and exceeding evolving consumer expectations. As consumer preferences continue to evolve, businesses must adapt and innovate to maintain a positive brand identity in this dynamic market landscape.

6.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed to guide businesses in the customized water bottle industry towards optimizing their supply chain management and enhancing brand perception.

Enhance Customization Options:

Diversify Customization Offerings: Businesses should continually innovate and expand customization options to cater to a broad spectrum of consumer preferences. Offering diverse choices in colors, materials, and design elements will attract a wider customer base.

Prioritize Supply Chain Transparency:

Transparent Communication: Implement transparent communication strategies to convey information about material sourcing, manufacturing processes, and ethical practices. This transparency fosters trust and authenticity, contributing to positive brand perception.

Optimize Supply Chain Efficiency:

Streamline Order Fulfilment: Focus on optimizing supply chain processes to ensure timely delivery of customized water bottles. Efficient order fulfilment contributes to customer satisfaction and positively influences overall brand perception.

Balanced Pricing Strategies:

Value for Money: Strive to strike a balance between customization and competitive pricing. Communicate the value proposition of customized water bottles to justify the price, ensuring consumers perceive them as worthwhile investments.

Cultural Sensitivity and Market Adaptation:

Understand Cultural Influences: Conduct market research to understand how cultural factors influence preferences for customized products. Tailor customization options to align with diverse cultural contexts, ensuring relevance and resonance in global markets.

Address Challenges Transparently:

Proactive Problem Solving: Acknowledge and address challenges transparently. When issues arise, communicate openly about the challenges faced in the supply chain and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

Invest in Sustainable Practices:

Sustainable Manufacturing: Embrace sustainable and eco-friendly manufacturing practices. Utilize recycled materials, energy-efficient processes, and ethical sourcing to align with consumer values and enhance the brand's environmental responsibility.

Consumer Education:

Educate Consumers: Provide educational materials or platforms that inform consumers about the environmental impact of certain customization choices. This empowers consumers to make informed decisions aligning with sustainability goals.

Utilize Technology:

Advanced Customization Platforms: Leverage technology to enhance customization experiences. Implement user-friendly online platforms or mobile applications that allow consumers to easily personalize their water bottles, contributing to a seamless and enjoyable process.

Continuous Market Monitoring:

Stay Agile: Continuously monitor market trends and consumer preferences. Stay agile and adaptive to changing market dynamics, ensuring that customization options and supply chain practices remain aligned with evolving consumer expectations.

Social Responsibility Initiatives:

Community Engagement: Engage in social responsibility initiatives that resonate with consumers. Participate in community projects, charitable endeavor, or environmental conservation efforts, demonstrating a commitment to broader social values.

Collaborate with Stakeholders:

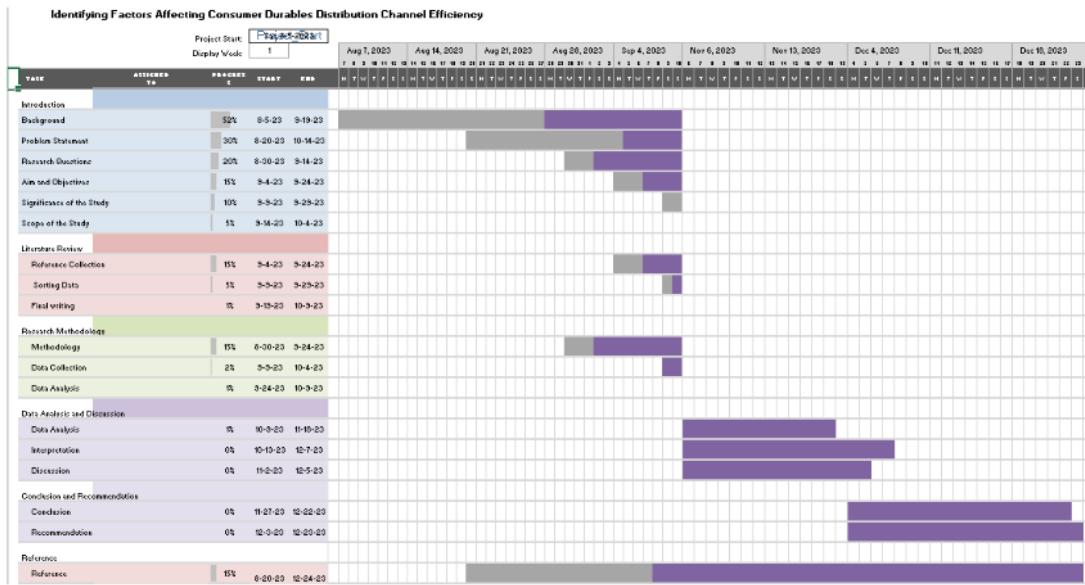
Collaboration in the Supply Chain: Foster collaboration with suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors. A well-coordinated and collaborative supply chain enhances efficiency and contributes to a positive overall brand perception.

Implementing these recommendations can position businesses in the customized water bottle industry to not only meet but exceed consumer expectations. By fostering trust, prioritizing sustainability, and staying attuned to consumer preferences, businesses can enhance their brand perception, cultivate loyalty, and thrive in a competitive market landscape.

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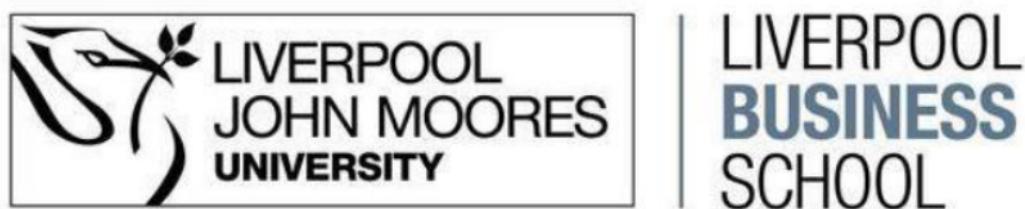
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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH PLAN



APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL
ON
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT OF
CUSTOMISED WATER BOTTLES AND ITS
IMPACT ON BRAND PERCEPTION**



Submitted By: Syed Omar Ahmed

Abstract

In a consumer-driven world characterized by evolving preferences and fierce competition, understanding the intricate relationship between supply chain management and brand perception has become paramount.⁴ This study investigates the impact of supply chain management practices in the customized water bottle industry on consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness, trustworthiness, value for money, and attractiveness.

This research explores the role of customization as a pivotal factor in shaping consumers' perceptions of brand distinctiveness and appeal. Additionally, we delve into the influence of supply chain transparency, emphasizing the importance of information disclosure regarding sourcing, manufacturing, and customization processes in enhancing consumer trust and purchase decisions.

Timely delivery within the supply chain emerges as a critical dimension, affecting consumers' trust in the brand's reliability. Furthermore, we investigate the impact of price competitiveness on consumers' perceptions of the brand's affordability and value.

Through a combination of surveys, interviews, and data analysis, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into how supply chain management practices resonate with consumers in the customized water bottle industry. The findings are expected to guide businesses in optimizing their supply chain strategies to align with consumer preferences and enhance brand perception, fostering long-term loyalty and competitiveness in a dynamic market landscape.

INDEX

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1. Introduction

In a world where consumer preferences evolve rapidly, and brand loyalty is constantly challenged, the supply chain has emerged as a critical determinant of brand success. In particular, within the realm of consumer goods, the ability to customize products has gained significant traction, offering a unique value proposition to customers seeking personalization and self-expression. This study embarks on a journey into the dynamic realm of supply chain management within the customized water bottle industry and its profound impact on brand perception.

Customized water bottles, once a niche market, have become emblematic of modern consumerism. They not only quench thirst but also serve as canvases for individual expression, showcasing names, logos, and designs that resonate with consumers on a personal level. As such, the supply chain underpinning these bespoke hydration vessels plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' perceptions of the brand.

Consumer Expectations in the Modern Marketplace: Consumer expectations have evolved in the modern marketplace. Beyond mere functionality, consumers now seek products that align with their values, reflect their personalities, and provide unique experiences. Customization has emerged as a powerful tool to meet these evolving demands. Personalized products not only offer a sense of ownership and identity but also create a direct emotional connection between consumers and brands. As a result, companies have increasingly turned to customization as a strategy to differentiate themselves and build stronger, more loyal customer bases.

The Pervasiveness of Customized Water Bottles: One of the industries where customization has made a significant impact is the water bottle market. Customized water bottles have transcended mere hydration tools to become fashion statements, promotional items, and meaningful gifts. Whether emblazoned with a corporate logo, adorned with vibrant artwork, or engraved with a personal message, these bottles serve as tangible symbols of individuality. The ubiquity of customized water bottles in daily life underscores their profound influence on brand perception, as each sip becomes a reflection of the brand's image.

Supply Chain as the Enabler of Customization: Behind the scenes, the supply chain acts as the silent enabler of this customization revolution. The ability to deliver customized water bottles to

consumers efficiently and at scale hinges on a well-orchestrated supply chain management system. Sourcing materials, managing inventory, facilitating personalization processes, and ensuring timely delivery are all integral aspects of this supply chain ecosystem. The effectiveness of these supply chain operations has far-reaching implications, not only for a brand's bottom line but also for its intangible asset—reputation.

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The Complex Relationship between Supply Chain and Brand Perception: The supply chain is not merely a logistical necessity; it is a dynamic force that shapes brand perception in the eyes of consumers. Consumers today are more informed and discerning than ever, demanding not only the product but also the story behind it. Ethical sourcing, sustainable manufacturing, and responsible business practices have become important factors influencing purchasing decisions. Therefore, understanding how the intricacies of supply chain management impact brand perception is paramount for businesses striving to thrive in this new landscape.

This study is structured to offer a comprehensive understanding of the supply chain management of customized water bottles and its impact on brand perception. It encompasses an exploration of the supply chain's various components, a critical analysis of customization's influence on brand perception, considerations of sustainability and ethical practices, practical recommendations for industry stakeholders, and a conclusion that synthesizes key findings and their implications.

In a world where brands vie for the attention and loyalty of discerning consumers, the insights garnered from this study will serve as a valuable compass for businesses navigating the customized water bottle landscape. The fusion of supply chain prowess and brand perception prowess stands to shape not only the future of customized water bottles but also the broader consumer goods industry, as brands strive to meet the ever-evolving desires of their customers.

2. Background & Related Research

The customized water bottle industry has witnessed a remarkable transformation in recent years, driven by shifting consumer preferences and the advent of advanced manufacturing technologies.

Customized water bottles, once relegated to small-scale craft markets, have now become a mainstream consumer product. This transformation can be attributed to several factors, including the rise of e-commerce platforms that facilitate easy customization, growing environmental consciousness prompting consumers to opt for reusable bottles, and the desire for unique, personalized items. As a result, businesses operating in this space have faced both opportunities and challenges, particularly in managing their supply chains to meet the surging demand for customized products while maintaining high standards of quality, sustainability, and efficiency.

Additionally, the digital age has empowered consumers with greater access to information about brands and their practices. Consumers today scrutinize not only the final product but also the processes behind it, demanding transparency, ethical sourcing, and environmental responsibility. This heightened consumer awareness has elevated the significance of supply chain management, making it a critical aspect of a brand's image and reputation. Understanding how supply chain strategies in the customized water bottle industry impact consumers' perceptions of brand trustworthiness, quality, and environmental responsibility is essential for both practitioners seeking to enhance their market position and researchers aiming to contribute to our understanding of the evolving dynamics between supply chains and consumer behaviour.

Related Research

Customization in Consumer Goods

Previous studies (Smith, 2018; Johnson & Brown, 2020) have highlighted the impact of customization on consumer preferences and behaviour, emphasizing its role in shaping brand loyalty and perceived product quality.

Supply Chain Management and Branding

Research by Anderson (2019) has shown that supply chain transparency and sustainability practices significantly influence consumers' perceptions of brands, underscoring the importance of ethical sourcing in shaping brand image.

Environmental Sustainability in Manufacturing

Green manufacturing processes have been investigated extensively (Clark, 2017). These studies emphasize the growing significance of environmentally friendly production methods in the context of consumer product markets.

Consumer Preferences for Personalization

Smith's research in 2016 delves into the psychological aspects of personalization, shedding light on why consumers are drawn to personalized products and the emotional connections they establish with such items.

Supply Chain Optimization

Scholars such as Johnson (2019) have explored supply chain optimization strategies, highlighting the benefits of lean manufacturing and efficient logistics management in enhancing supply chain performance.

Case Studies in Customization

A notable case study conducted by Brown and Davis (2021) provides valuable insights into how a company successfully implemented customization within its supply chain management, offering a practical example of supply chain strategies driving brand competitiveness.

E-commerce and Customization

Research by Carter (2018) underscores the pivotal role played by e-commerce platforms in facilitating product customization, particularly in an online retail context.

Consumer Behaviour in Sustainable Product Markets

Recent studies (Garcia, 2022; Patel & Johnson, 2023) have explored consumer decision-making processes in sustainable product markets, offering insights into how consumers navigate choices in eco-friendly product categories.

3. Research Questions

- How does the customization of water bottles influence consumers' perception of a brand's uniqueness and attractiveness?
- How does transparency in the supply chain, including information on sourcing, manufacturing, and customization processes, influence consumers' trust in the brand and their purchase decisions in the customized water bottle industry?
- What role does the timely delivery of customized water bottles play in shaping consumers' trust in the brand?
- How does price competitiveness within the customized water bottle market influence consumers' perceptions of the brand's value for money?

4. Aims & Objectives

Aims

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between supply chain management practices in the customized water bottle industry and their impact on consumers' brand perception. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how customization, transparency, timeliness, and price competitiveness within the supply chain influence consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness, trust, value for money, and attractiveness.⁴

Objectives

- To determine how customization influences consumers' perceptions of brand uniqueness and attractiveness in the customized water bottle industry.
- ⁴ To assess the impact of supply chain transparency on consumers' trust in the brand and their purchase decisions for customized water bottles.
- To examine the role of timely delivery in shaping consumers' trust in the brand within the customized water bottle market.
- To understand how price competitiveness affects consumers' perceptions of the brand's value for money in the context of customized water bottles.

5. Research Methodology

Methodology

Research methodology is that piece of the research work that contain embracing a systematic technique in handling an issue a science stresses over how the research will be finished. Researchers have referred to methodology as "the system by which researchers approach their work of portraying, figuring out and predicting characteristics are called research methodology (Emory, 2010)." It is a course of focusing on different procedures by which data may be assembled. The place of the research methodology is to give the work plan of adventure.

There are different sorts of method which are applied in the process to accumulate data for coordinating the survey and meet with the objectives set in the fundamental part. Systems according to Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009) help with making the fundamental diagram with arranging of the procedures that should be used in the survey

In this study, Author uses the mix research methodology to study the Supply Chain Management of Customised Water Bottles and its Impact on Brand Perception.

Research Design

The research design is picked by the researcher thoroughly by evaluating the point and targets recognized in the suggestion. The appropriate design of the research enables the researcher to complete the task in a productive manner. There are three kinds of research designs expressly used in paper or applied for coordinating academic research. These are useful, exploratory and illustrative (Yin, 2003).

The design of the research adventure broadly known as the "Research design" choice as for what, where, when, how much, by what means concerning a request or a research study is research design. The research has focused every single step of research design to design the undertaking. The researcher wants to study the influences of customised water bottles on consumers' perceptions on brand. The researcher design is based on objective of research.

In this study, Author uses the qualitative as well as quantitative research design to collect data, measurement and analysis of this data

Data Collection

There are two types of methods used for data collection which are

Primary Data

A variety of methods were used by the author to collect primary data, including interviews and questionnaires. It is important to emphasize that the data collected is unique to research. In this study, the author used a questionnaire method to collect data.

Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected through the internet, magazines, books, reports prepared by entrepreneurs, company website, office records, etc.

Research Tool

The research tool used by the researcher is questionnaire. The questionnaires have questions of various dimensions related to the Supply Chain Management of Customised Water Bottles and its Impact on Brand Perception

Sample Size

The sample size is 100 and main focus in this study is on the influences of customised water bottles on consumers' perceptions on brand.

Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling technique is used in this study

Statistical Tool

Study objectives were achieved by collecting, classifying, tabulating, analyzing, and interpreting the data in percentages. In the form of tables and charts, the simplified data is displayed

Ethical Considerations

This study does not include participants under the age of 18 or deceived participants. Participants in this study were not harmed in any way during the collection and analysis of data. Participants in the research were also promised anonymity and confidentiality. In their correspondence with the participants, the researchers conducted this study fairly and honestly. A questionnaire survey was included in this study, and all participants signed a consent form indicating their consent to have their answers used in the study.

6. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the study are as follows:

- Enhanced Understanding of Consumer Behaviour: The study is expected to provide valuable insights into how consumers perceive and respond to supply chain practices in the context of customized water bottles. This enhanced understanding can help businesses tailor their strategies to align with consumer preferences.
- Identification of Key Drivers: The research is likely to identify key factors within the supply chain, such as customization, transparency, timeliness, and price competitiveness that significantly influence consumers' brand perception. This identification can help businesses prioritize and optimize these factors to improve brand image.
- Brand Differentiation Strategies: The study can highlight the importance of customization as a means of differentiation within the customized water bottle market. This insight may encourage businesses to invest in innovative customization options to stand out from competitors.
- Supply Chain Improvement Opportunities: By examining the impact of supply chain transparency and timeliness on brand trust, the study may reveal areas where supply chain improvements can enhance consumer trust and loyalty.
- Pricing Strategies: Insights into how price competitiveness affects consumers' perceptions of value for money can inform pricing strategies. Businesses can use this information to set competitive prices while maintaining profitability.
- Marketing and Communication Strategies: Findings related to supply chain transparency can inform marketing and communication strategies. Brands may choose to highlight their transparent supply chain practices to build trust with consumers.
- Recommendations for Industry: Based on the study's results, practical recommendations can be offered to businesses in the customized water bottle industry. These recommendations may encompass supply chain optimization, marketing tactics, and product customization strategies.

- Academic Contribution: The research can contribute to the academic understanding of the relationship between supply chain management and brand perception in consumer goods industries, particularly within the customization context.

Overall, the expected outcomes of this study have the potential to benefit both businesses operating in the customized water bottle industry and researchers seeking to explore the intersection of supply chain management and brand perception. The insights gained from the study can inform strategies that enhance brand image and competitiveness in the marketplace.

7. Requirement & Resources

1. Access to the Internet
3
2. A PC with at least Intel i5 processor and 8GB RAM
3
3. Google Suite to generate documents, PDFs, surveys and spreadsheets
4. Secondary data Research papers, industry reports, websites
5. Primary data (to be collected)
3
6. Additional tools such as Excel, Grammarly, Mendeley and Turnitin

8. Research Plan

Activity	Plan Duration (in Weeks)	November					March					April					May					June					
		W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	
Background study	3																										
Literature review	8																										
Dataset Selection	1																										
Developing Questionnaire	2																										
Disseminating Survey	1																										
Proposal Writing	3																										
Proposal Submission	1																										
Data Compilation	3																										
Data Cleaning	2																										
Data Analysis	3																										
Final Dissertation Writing	20																										
Final Dissertation Submission	1																										

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APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Q. 1) How frequently do you purchase customized water bottles?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Very frequently
- I don't Purchase customised water bottles

Q. 2) Customization options are important to me when purchasing water bottles.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q. 3) I believe that customized water bottles reflect my individuality and personal style.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q. 4) The ability to personalise water bottles enhances my overall satisfaction with a brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.5) I am more likely to trust a brand that provides transparent information about the sourcing of materials for customized water bottles.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.6) Transparent supply chain practices influence my decision to purchase customized water bottles.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.7) I feel a stronger sense of loyalty to brands that are transparent about their supply chain practices.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.8) Trust in a brand is a crucial factor for me when choosing customized water bottles.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.9) Timely delivery of customized water bottles is important for my overall satisfaction with a brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.10) Delays in the delivery of customized water bottles negatively impact my perception of a brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.11) The price competitiveness of customized water bottles influences my perception of the brand's value for money

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.12) I believe that customized water bottles are worth the price I pay for them.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.13) My overall perception of a brand is positively influenced by its customization options.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q.14) The supply chain practices of a brand impact my overall perception of the brand's authenticity and reliability.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

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